

Bridging the Gap between Closure and Long-term Stewardship – Ensuring a Smooth Transition

The second Waste Management Symposium workshop focusing on long-term stewardship issues: *Bridging the Gap Between Closure and Long-term Stewardship – Ensuring a Smooth Transition* provided an opportunity for interactive discussion among approximately 100 attendees from all sectors – Federal, local, and state government; contractors; community leaders; and interested public. The speakers presented various aspects of closure and long-term stewardship issues: mission, goals, and challenges of the Closure and Long-term Stewardship Programs; site- and media-specific concerns during the transition from closure to long-term stewardship; and future challenges anticipated during the transition from closure to long-term stewardship. Dr. R.F. Shangraw, Jr., Chief Executive Office, Project Performance Corporation and Thomas M. Leschine, Associate Professor, School of Marine Affairs, University of Washington jointly facilitated the session.

With the continued pressure to show progress toward completion of environmental restoration activities, and the increasing understanding of the long-term obligations, completing closure and initiating long-term stewardship activities continues to be of significant interest. However, there is confusion regarding at what point sites (or portions of sites) are considered transitioned from a closure/project completion phase into a long-term stewardship phase. This is something that will not only depend on the future mission of a site (e.g., in the case of a national laboratory), but also on the type of medium that is being addressed (e.g., at what point is groundwater remediation/monitoring considered a long-term stewardship activity?).

To address this situation, it is clear that DOE will need to ensure close coordination between the Offices of Site Closure and Long-term Stewardship, as well as other offices within the Environmental Management program and other DOE Offices (e.g., Defense Programs). As such, this workshop was an opportunity to bring the various DOE Offices together and discuss emerging closure and long-term stewardship transition issues:

· **Setting the Stage: Missions and Goals of the Closure and Long-term Stewardship Programs.** Representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Site Closure, Idaho Operations Office, and the Office of Long-term Stewardship provided their offices' goals and mission with regards to closure and long-term stewardship.

· *John Lehr, Director, Office of Small Site Closure, Office of Site Closure, U.S. DOE* – provided an explanation of what is meant by site closure. Mr. Lehr explained the new Office of Site Closure within DOE and the office's role in developing and implementing an effective closure program. He also referenced the key aspects of transitioning from closure to long-term stewardship.

· *Beverly Cook, Manager, Idaho Operations Office, U.S. DOE* – presented the importance of an integrated approach to long-term stewardship. Ms. Cook emphasized the need to clearly articulate the government's commitment to the public regarding long-term stewardship. This can be done by centralizing the long-term stewardship efforts, maintaining adequate funding for long-term stewardship, managing relevant information, and being proactive in terms of responding to changing conditions. Ms. Cook emphasized that these actions, along with others, will provide the assurance that the public needs.

· *Jonathan Kang, Program Manager, Office of Long-term Stewardship, U.S. DOE* – explained the mission and goals of the new Office of Long-term Stewardship within DOE and the office's role in developing and implementing an effective long-term stewardship program. Mr. Kang referenced major deliverables and ongoing activities that evaluate the current status and future needs of long-term stewardship at DOE sites. He also discussed the key challenges for effective long-term stewardship and highlighted the comprehensive review of the Department's anticipated long-term stewardship obligations as documented in the *FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act Report to Congress*.

· **Planning the Transition from Closure to Long-term Stewardship.** Representatives from the DOE Grand Junction Office, National Energy Technology Laboratory, and the Office of Integration and Disposition provided their perspective on site-wide as well as media-specific issues relating to the transition from closure to long-term stewardship.

· *Donna Bergman-Tabbert, Manager, Grand Junction Office, U.S. DOE* – presented the approach to long-term stewardship used by the Grand Junction Office. Ms. Bergman-Tabbert focused on the key aspects of transitioning from closure to long-term stewardship at the site-wide level, such as establishing long-term stewardship plans, identifying the long-term stewardship activities, monitoring performance, and determining long-term stewardship costs.

· *Steve Bossart, Project Manager, National Energy Technology Laboratory, U.S. DOE* – explained the long-term stewardship perspective on deactivation and decommissioning facilities. To highlight the long-term stewardship issues, Mr. Bossart focused on the Mound facilities long-term stewardship initiative.

· *Steve Golian, Office of Integration and Disposition, U.S. DOE* – provided insight on groundwater remediation implications for long-term stewardship. Mr. Golian emphasized the long-term implications once a groundwater remedial strategy is in place. He also highlighted several important issues that need to be considered when transitioning from closure to long-term stewardship, such as transition timing, projected future use/ ownership, minimum acceptance criteria, and degree of contingency planning.

· **Moving Forward.** Representatives from the DOE Office of Environmental Policy and Guidance and the University of Washington provided their insights on the myths surrounding long-term stewardship and on a proposed path forward for the long-term stewardship program.

· *Rich Dailey, Office of Environmental Policy and Guidance, U.S. DOE* – discussed the issue that even if uncertainty exists, sites can still transition to long-term stewardship. Mr. Dailey presented the uncertainty matrix, which is one tool developed to manage uncertainty. He also emphasized that long-term stewardship is not any different than what sites are doing now. In fact, cleanup and long-term stewardship are really different phases of the same overall process. The goal remains the same: to protect human health and the environment.

· *Thomas Leschine, Associate Professor, School of Marine Affairs, University of Washington* – based his presentation on the results of the National Research Council study of the long-term institutional management of DOE legacy waste sites. Mr. Leschine focused on what DOE is doing now and what DOE needs to do in the future to

management their legacy waste. He concluded by providing a few characteristics of an effective long-term stewardship program.

Following the presentations, the audience responded with several questions and comments. Audience interest focused on several areas, including how to effectively implement the long-term stewardship activities, how to accurately determine potential costs for these activities, continuing to include public involvement as a critical element in all long-term planning, and future information management. However, one unifying point was that planning for the transition from closure to long-term stewardship is an emerging issue; an issue that will require considerable coordination and effort among multiple parties both within and outside of the Department to ensure the ultimate goal is achieved, that of continued protection of human health and the environment once remediation activities are completed at sites.